

DATE ISSUED: April 23, 2001

REPORT NO. 01-079

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of April 25, 2001

SUBJECT: Disability Services Program Status Report

REFERENCE: Manager's Report 00-83

SUMMARY

Issues- 1) Should the City Council accept the Disability Services 2001 Program Status Report? 2) Should the City Council direct the City Manager to develop program enhancing policy recommendations for consideration during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2002?

Recommendations- 1) Accept the Disability Services 2001 Program Status Report.
2) Direct the City Manager to develop program enhancing policy recommendations and return by the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2002.

Other Recommendations- None.

Fiscal Impact- Approximately \$1.45 million in CDBG funds has been allocated annually for the past six years. Individual Council offices have also contributed additional funds to assist with completing district specific projects.

BACKGROUND

The City of San Diego's Disability Services Program is responsible for compliance with State Title XXIV and Federal American's with Disabilities Act regulations. The program originated in 1992 with a program coordinator. Over time, a construction estimator and staff analyst were added to assist with increased demands of the program. In 1997, the City adopted Phase 1 of its federally mandated transition plan. This plan was prepared in coordination with the Citizens Review Committee on ADA and Disability Issues (CRC). A total of 214 public facilities were identified for upgrades in this phase of the plan. As the plan was designed to address the mandate in phases, it included only high priority public facilities requiring upgrades. An additional 240 medium to high public use facilities will be addressed in the later phases of the program.

Ramps, sidewalks, audible signals, beaches, parks and lakes were not included in this original transition plan. However, since the 1970s, the City has administered a curb ramp retrofit program. With the assistance of the Subcommittee for the Removal of Access Barriers (SCRAB), the City has developed a audible signal program that includes a nationally recognized evaluation process.

DISCUSSION

Fiscal Year 2001 Status Report

The Disability Services team has taken a creative and proactive approach to addressing the needs of the program. This year, significant improvements have been made in citywide training, interdepartmental relations, resource management and community outreach.

Under the barrier removal program, 60 facilities have been updated (52 through Disability Services at a cost of \$3,440,900, and 8 by other City Departments). Another 100 facilities have been identified and surveyed, with 55 funded (at an estimated cost of \$6,647,775) and scheduled. A total of 45 facilities are listed in the Plan for completion by 2003, that remain unfunded and unscheduled. The estimated cost of these projects is approximately \$6,854,700. An additional 37 facilities listed in the Plan, require access surveys, funding and scheduling if they are to be completed by the current Plan deadline of 2006.

We have installed 1,225 pedestrian ramps and 72 audible signals. Additional ramps and accessible parking spaces have been installed on projects, outside of the program, that have impacted public paths of travel. Attachment 1 provides details of all accomplishments made to date and includes a status report of facilities ramps and audible signals by Council District. Accomplishments are reported under four distinct categories: Programmatic, Facilities, Ramps and Audible Signals.

Policy Issues

Last June, City Council approved two recommendations designed to enhance the Disability Services Program. These recommendations were: 1) hiring in-house staff consisting of a full time engineer with experience and expertise in ADA/Title 24 requirements and a full time attorney dedicated to the program and 2) hiring independent consultants on complex City funded projects. Of the staff hired, costs associated with these recommendations were reimbursed through project specific and CDBG program funds. During the discussion of these recommendations, staff was directed to return to Public Safety and Neighborhood Services detailing what is needed to improve the City's ADA compliance program and create accessibility throughout City facilities and practices. This portion of the report responds to that direction. Over the past 16 months, the Disability Services Program Coordinator has met with numerous citizens, expanded citywide training, reviewed and implemented existing policies, resolved outstanding internal and external issues, identified and filled many gaps in services, staffed and added new structure to both the CRC and SCRAB, responded to citizen complaints and aggressively pursued additional funds for the program. In addition, a number of internal, programmatic and interdepartmental process improvements have been developed and implemented. All of these activities have been undertaken with a commitment to making San Diego accessible to all people with diverse disabilities.

The current staffing level of a program manager, construction estimator, management analyst and clerical assistant has been able to provide the existing level of services which includes: 1) staffing CRC and SCRAB committees (including minutes, responding to inquiries, facilitating meetings, etc.); 2) conducting surveys of existing and some newly-built facilities and preparing reports of facilities, ramps, parks, beaches, lakes, etc.; 3) supervising and tracking construction projects (retrofit); 4) reviewing plans and specifications; 5) responding to Mayor, Council,

Manager, and other City staff inquiries and requests; 6) responding to citizen inquiries and providing information/referral and community outreach and arranging for citywide sign language interpreters; 7) budgeting, accounting as well as report preparation; 8) developing, scheduling and conducting internal Disability Awareness Training; 9) developing and implementing tracking systems, reviewing existing policy implementation and initiating new processes toward consistent compliance; and 10) general administration.

While the City has made significant progress in a number of areas, the following activities still require attention:

45 facilities in the current Transition Plan that have been surveyed require funding;

37 facilities from the current Transition Plan need to be surveyed, funded and scheduled;

The Transition Plan needs to be updated to reflect the current status of each project;

Citywide program self-evaluations from 1995 need to be reviewed and monitored with recommendations and implementation plans for compliance;

Additional phases of the Transition Plan need to be designed, developed, funded and implemented to include the 240 additional high use facilities as well as sidewalks, lakes, parks and beaches;

Approximately 641 ramps are currently on the request list with approximately 20,000 more requiring funding and installation;

55 audible signals are currently on the request list with approximately 300 more requiring funding and installation;

Awareness training sessions need to be scheduled and conducted for City employees in addition to the 18 originated in October of 2000;

Internal resources need to be aggressively developed and monitored;

Outside funding sources need to be identified and pursued;

A high-level interdepartmental committee needs to be established in order to ensure efficient statistical tracking, program coordination, collaboration and consistent city-wide compliance while being conscientious of cost containment;

Disability Services program staff need increased participation in the employment aspects of the city-wide Program; and

New policies need to be developed and recommended that address improvements in existing programs and unmet needs (i.e. customer service training for varying disability groups, review permitting policies related to ADA, etc.).

In order to comply with the intent and letter of the law, the additional actions listed above need to be accomplished. In order to stay on track with the Transition Plan and accomplish the

program objectives, additional funds need to be identified to support the underfunded or unfunded requirements of the program.

ALTERNATIVE(S): None.

Respectfully submitted,		
Linda Woodbury Disability Services Coordinator		Concur: Debra Fischle-Faulk Deputy Director, Community Services
Concur: Hank Cunningham, Director Community and Economic Development		Approved: Bruce A. Herring Deputy City Manager

CUNNINGHAM/DFP/LJW

Note: The attachment is not available in electronic format. A copy is available for review in the Office of the City Clerk.

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Attachment(s):1. Disability Services Status Report..